

TRICARE Northwest



Family Member Dental Plan Now Available Overseas

Chris Hober, NWLA

Military family members will be happy to know that United Concordia has expanded their dental coverage to include virtually all out of country locations. The change, phased in throughout 1999, will not result in a rise in allotted dental premiums, and those already enrolled in the Family Member Dental Plan will automatically receive coverage when they move.

Although the same benefits will be available as those currently offered in the United States, United Concordia cautions that not all services may be available or accessible in certain overseas locations. It should also be noted that procedures are somewhat different, depending on whether a

uniformed services dental clinic exists in country.

Beneficiaries must obtain a Non-Availability and Referral Form from the dental clinic before obtaining any dental services, where such a dental clinic is present. In countries where there is no uniformed services dental facility, family members should contact their respective lead agent office to determine who is authorized to provide dental care in the area. Regardless of whether a uniformed dental clinic is present, referrals are required for all orthodontic services.

There are some differences in the overseas program that will benefit military family members. If maximums have not been met, the govern-



ment will pay the individual's cost share for basic restorative services, sealants, endodontics, periodontics, and oral surgery. The government will also pay the difference between the providers billed charges and the United Concordia allowance.

Those who begin orthodontic care under the program while in the U. S. may continue those services overseas as long as their lifetime maximums have not been reached. A referral is

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Over 300 New Pharmacies Available to TRICARE Users!

Janice Rosenthal-Rock, FHFS

Your corner drugstore just got closer! TRICARE Northwest is pleased to welcome four new pharmacy chains into its network: Safeway, Longs Drugs, and Fred Meyer. Albertsons will join the network in early January.

Finding a participating TRICARE pharmacy in your area is now easier than ever. Safeway, Longs Drugs, Albertsons and Fred Meyer will add **over 300** pharmacies to our Washington Oregon/Idaho net-

work! When using a network pharmacy to fill your prescription, simply present your TRICARE Prime ID card (or military ID card if you use TRICARE Standard or Extra) and pay your copayment or cost-share. Those enrolled in TRICARE Prime Remote may also access the expanded pharmacy network. TPR enrollees do not pay cost shares or co-pays for prescriptions.

As a reminder, prescriptions can also be ordered

through the National Mail Order Pharmacy by calling (800) 903-4680 or online at www.merck-medco.com. If you would like help locating a network pharmacy near you, please call a Customer Care Representative



MILITARY ID CARD REQUIREMENT FOR PRESCRIPTION SERVICE

Theresa Harris, NHOH PAO



An agent or a family member may now pick up prescriptions for patients at Naval Hospital Oak Harbor. There are a few specific requirements, however, which must be followed.

A military ID card must be shown prior to receiving any filled medications. There have been numerous problems with this policy in the past. Command and Pharmacy personnel have found a solution which will make this less of a hassle.

If the agent or family

member, at least 18 years of age, **does not have the actual, original military ID card of the patient** for presentation, a photocopy of the ID will be accepted. The photocopy must include both sides of the military ID card, an original (non-photocopied) signature and a written authorization statement identifying the presenting family member or agent. The dated signature must be within one year of pharmacy services.

The authorized agent may pick up only one per-

son's medication per day (i.e., an agent cannot pick up medications for three of his neighbors). A family member may pick up medications for more than one family member (i.e., dad can pick up medications for his wife and children at the same time). Family member refers to anyone living in the immediate household.

This added service would allow the patient to keep their ID card on them at all times.

Optometry services change at Naval Hospital Bremerton

Judith Robertson, NHB PAO

Much of the Optometry services conducted at the Naval Hospital have been shifted to building 87 in the area that was the Child Waiting Room. The move is a long awaited improvement that adds space, convenience and proximity to the Optical Shop that occupies the same building.

According to Optometrist Lt. Joseph Trull, MSC, USN, the new facility is especially beneficial for active duty personnel. "We've been working here since early Nov. and in most cases our active duty patients can come in for their eye exams and walk out with glasses in one hour. It's a one-stop shop for them," he said.

Family members and retirees may have to make a second trip,

Trull said, but with two Optometrists and the convenience of the clinic there have been no complaints about service. "It's just a bit confusing for some of our routine patients who are used to going down to the main hospital. We want them to know parking is easier at building 87 and it's not hard to find."

Patients with appointments with Trull or Cmdr. Ricky Toyama should go to the Building 87 Optometry Clinic located on Work Road, which is the first left hand turn directly across from the satellite drive-through pharmacy, when

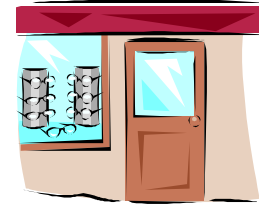


entering the hospital campus. Bldg. 87 is then on your right and parking is available directly in front of the building.

If an Optometry appointment is scheduled with Dr.

Charles Moorehead, OD, the patient will continue to go to the Optometry Clinic on the 3rd floor of the main hospital building.

Appointments for either Optometry site are made through the Tricare Regional Appointment Center by calling 1-800-404-4506.



Family Member Dental Plan Now Available Overseas Cont'd

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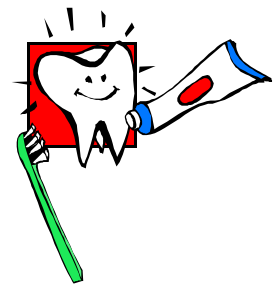
necessary to continue the care, however. Beneficiaries will still be responsible for the 50% cost share for orthodontic care.

In some cases, a provider may ask for payment up front. In order to have the claims paid, beneficiaries must provide a completed claim form, a complete and valid referral form, and an itemized bill from the provider with his/

her full name, address and phone number. For the purposes of claims payment, the service area is determined by the location of the provider, not the home address of the person receiving care.

For more information on the TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan and the out-of-country option, pick up a OCONUS Overview Brochure, contact the United Concordia

Website at www.ucci.com, or contact United Concordia's OCONUS Dental Unit at (717) 975-5017. The unit is open Monday through Friday from 3 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.



Growing: Nuke Tech Works Toward M.D.

Judith Robertson, NHB PAO

A former Navy "Nuke" who originally shied away from blood and guts, will soon put doctor in front of his name, because he didn't want to live with regrets.

Ensign Patrick Schuette began Navy life in April 1987, with a high school diploma and a few college credits. After completing the Navy's nuclear power training program, he was assigned to Submarine Base Bangor as an Engineering Laboratory Technician aboard the USS Ohio (Gold). He said he had always considered becoming an officer because, "I felt I had more opportunities available to me as an officer than as a Machinist Mate. I knew that if I didn't try, I would always question whether I could have become an officer. I didn't want to have regrets because I didn't try."

The California native continued college courses while attached to the Ohio, and applied for the Enlisted Commissioning Program. "I wasn't sure I would be accepted into ECP because of the competitiveness of the program, but Master Chief Arlan Moore, my department senior enlisted advisor, encouraged me.

Schuette took that advice to heart even when it meant overcoming some emotional obstacles as he began considering medical school. "I grew up on a farm. From time to time we had

to do the butchering. I really didn't like the butchering part, but I was always curious about the internal organs. I also hated needles. I became light headed once giving blood. Then I got injured and ended up in an emergency room and had to return to orthopedics several times. That experience put the seed in my mind."

Schuette volunteered in an emergency room for two years, mostly taking vital signs and cleaning up. That experience gave him an understanding of the job and his reaction to it, he said. "I changed a lot of bed sheets, but I also got a chance to observe the ER docs in action. It made me understand that I could handle working with illnesses and injuries. And I learned that I liked doing it."

Schuette now knew he wanted to be a doctor, but there was still the getting there. "I think many people are discouraged by all the work involved in applying for a program, or the thought that they may not be accepted into the program. I made other plans to fall back on and that helped reduce the anxiety I would feel if I hadn't been accepted into the programs I wanted," he said.

One of those back up plans was to become a Naval Flight Officer, another of Schuette's strong interests. "Now I can do both," he said. "I can apply for Naval Flight Surgeon." The 32-

year-old medical student said there are things he learned about himself as a Machinist Mate that will always be valuable.

"One of the reasons I went into medicine is because I could do 'hands-on' work, much as I did as a Machinist Mate. If I had become a line officer, I would take a more supervisory role and have less 'hands-on' work, at least relative to what I can do now," he said. "Being a Machinist Mate before becoming an officer gave me time to do some growing. I really believe that my enlisted experience will contribute to my becoming a better officer."

After 12 years in the Navy, and completion of his Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Idaho, Schuette is now in his final year at the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. He is thinking about applying to the Puget Sound Family Practice Residency Program, NHB's teaching arm, in May 2000 when the former Machinist Mate pins on his lieutenant's bars and puts doctor in front of his name.

